Minister Releases School Board Boundary Review Report

Department of Education

News Releases

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Education Minister Jane Purves has released the report of the Task Force on the Review of Nova Scotia School Board Boundaries.

"The task force has some valuable suggestions on making Nova Scotia school boards work better and be more accountable," said Ms. Purves. "We're now examining the six recommendations with a view to responding this spring."

The five-member task force toured the province earlier this year to review the effectiveness of Nova Scotia's elected school boards. School boards were amalgamated three years ago, turning 22 district boards into seven elected units.

The task force's report recommends that Nova Scotia's present school board boundaries should be maintained.

However, the task force report said the Southwest regional school board, which covers Lunenburg to Digby counties, is experiencing difficulty "in taking a broad regional perspective in its decision-making."

The report recommends that a pilot project be implemented "whereby the elected regional board be replaced by a site-based model, commencing November 2000." A site-based model will result in more local input and also reduce travel requirements, the task force said.

Other recommendations include:
-- enhancing communications approaches to curb administrative costs and reduce travel time
-- improving communications strategies and public-access protocols to help the public reach school board members and staff
-- working with school boards to strengthen the role of school advisory councils
-- enhancing professional development for school board members and their role in governing and managing public education

Ms. Purves acknowledged the work of the task force members, who considered a total of 485 submissions and heard presentations from 95 individuals in January and early February.

"I want to thank the members of the task force for their hard work, and as well as all those who made submissions, so frankly and honestly," she said.

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An education task force recommends against making any changes to Nova Scotia school board boundaries.

But the task force report does recommend some changes to the way school boards operate, including improving communication with the public.

Education Minister Jane Purves says government is reviewing the task force recommendations and plans to respond later this spring.

The task force conducted meeting across the province in January. More than 485 submissions and 95 presentations were heard.

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